

## **Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> 2006

6PM-8PM, City Hall L280

### **1. Call to order and introductions**

SPAB members in attendance: Jodie Vice (Chair), Jean Healy, Chris Tachibana (Board Secretary), Rob Fellows, Howard Wu, T. Frick McNamara, Ben Smith, Celeste Gilman, Sarah Ross-Viles, Fiona McCargo (Get Engaged)

Absent: Peg Staeheli

SDOT staff liaison: Megan Hoyt

Presenter: Gregg Hiramawa (SDOT)

### **2. Approval of July minutes**

### **3. Introduction of Fiona McCargo, new Get Engaged Member**

#### **4. Presentation on "Bridging the Gap" (6:05)**

**Gregg Hiramawa (SDOT)** presented publicly available information on Mayor Nickels' Bridging the Gap (BTG) proposal.

Background: the SDOT budget is \$177.1 million. Two-thirds for capital projects, rest for street maintenance, traffic management, routine small projects, operation support, central cities, permitting. The only dedicated revenue is the gas tax, which generated \$13.1 million; however, 11 years ago, adjusting for inflation, it was \$37.5 million. Loss of dedicated revenue has come from court decisions and citizens initiatives.

BTG is a 9-year levy raising \$500-550 million over 9 yrs through a) a phased-in 10% commercial parking tax; b) a business transportation tax, which will tax approximately 250,000 non-Seattle residents who come to Seattle to work. Jodie asked what percent drive and Gregg said this isn't known but those who bus or carpool will be exempt. The third recently added proposal is a property tax of about \$155 per year for the median home, that will generate \$37 million a year. This will be discussed at the City Council on Monday.

Regardless of the property tax, changes will not occur to the \$2-2.1 million a year for pedestrian programs, or to four capital projects: Mercer street, Spokane Street, Lander Street, and King Street Station.

Ben asked if the non-property tax portion of the proposal still needs approval. Gregg said those portions are already approved. Other independent tax issues may be decided separately by the legislature.

Rob asked about the 20-year levy. Gregg said that was meant to address the backlog of transportation issues, but that will be revisited in 9 years.

Rob asked how the levy money would be used in the future, after the capital projects, for example completing missing sidewalks? Gregg said there are other possible sources of money for this and there are pedestrian components in capital projects in major transportation corridors (for example, Northgate, Rainier), although this is not specifically to build missing sidewalks. Rob stressed that the Comprehensive Plan calls for Urban Villages, some of which do not have sidewalks. Gregg and Megan said that SDOT's criteria emphasizes sidewalks near schools, senior centers, transit centers.

Jodie asked what will be the increase in the budget for pedestrian programs. Megan and Gregg said it is difficult to add up, because money for sidewalks comes from different sources. There is also \$500,000 for sidewalks independent of other sources.

Jodie asked about the constancy of the pedestrian programs since the levy went from 20-years to 9-years. Gregg said an attachment in the existing resolution shows constant pedestrian program funding.

Ben asked about the effect of the Council decision next week. Gregg said it will direct the Mayor on how money should be spent in future budget cycles.

Ben asked about the Pedestrian Master Plan under this proposal. Gregg said everything is being readdressed. Ben said it seems like the property tax is paying for projects like the Master Plan, and asked what happened if it fails. Gregg said priorities will be addressed, depending on the election outcome.

Celeste asked about on-street parking fees. Gregg said these are used to manage parking and turn over spaces, rather than to generate revenue. The \$16 million goes to general funds.

Rob asked about polling. Gregg has no information, but all newspapers were against the 20-year levy. A priority will be resurfacing downtown streets before the Viaduct project begins.

Rob asked about financing from street utility. Gregg said it could come up after November.

Rob asked about alternative revenue and mitigation of Viaduct construction. Gregg said this is under discussion but no firm plans.

T asked what is the 1% for urban forestry. Gregg said this is for street trees. Ben asked if increases are part of the tax addressed by the Council next week. Gregg said that will be separate.

## **5. Presentation on Crosswalk Improvements (6:45)**

**Megan Hoyt (SDOT)** presented plans for marked crosswalks funded by the \$1.325 million for crosswalk improvements.

Decisions are based on studies that identified factors that determine where uncontrolled marked crosswalks do not increase the likelihood of a pedestrian-vehicle collision, which are the number of lanes to be crossed, vehicle volumes, posted speed limits. Megan has been surveying uncontrolled (no light or signal) crosswalks. Of 622 on arterials in 2001, 84 did not meet guidelines and were flagged for changes like reducing lanes, adding a signal or median island. If no safety improvements can be made, usage is addressed and crosswalks may be removed, which is controversial. Most funding has been through capital projects, but this means negotiating with repaving projects to consider crosswalks before replacing them. Of 37 problem sites, removal has been the best solution for 17 of them, with approximately 8 new pedestrian signals and 1-2 new road diets.

With the additional crosswalk improvement funds, the goal is 22 projects for 2006 and 28 for 2007. Megan will forward website info. Door-to-door information, posters and press releases will solicit public comment. Projects include 12 removals, 3 signals, 2 raised crosswalks (speed tables) on California Ave, 2 road diets (reduction in lanes, examples are Stone Way from 34th to 50th and Ballard on 24th NW from NW 56th St to NW 65<sup>th</sup> St. Signal is planned at Admiral Viewpoint.)

Sarah asked about the road diets. On Stone Way the plan is parking, bike lane, travel lane and left turn lane.

Celeste asked about monitoring after crosswalk removal. Megan checks collision records and has seen no spike in collisions at removal sites.

Fiona asked how parking in front of crosswalks affects visibility. Megan said this factor was in the 2001 sidewalk inventory, but making a crosswalk more visible alone hasn't been part of this current effort. Parking issues have related to bus stops and added restrictions.

T asked if money is for only existing crosswalks. Megan said the \$1.25 million right now is only to address problem crosswalks.

T asked price of signalized crosswalks, which Megan said is \$40,000-\$50,000 for low cost, up to over \$100,000.

Rob and Megan discussed the impact of raised crosswalks and road diets on Metro.

Megan will send an email about looking for people to fill four board vacancies by March with the goal of receiving applications in November. Jodie and Rob discussed contacting former applicants.

## **6. Discussion on Bridging the Gap (BTG) (7:20)**

Jodie proposed discussing Bridging the Gap. Jean and Jodie clarified that BTG is not connected with the Viaduct.

Rob thought the Council will not be taking comments, but Jodie thought a letter to the Legislature or letter to the editor might be possible.

T asked opinions on endorsing the proposal if we aren't satisfied with the amount of money for pedestrian programs. Sarah, Fiona and Jodie clarified that there is \$2.2 million for pedestrian programs and \$1.5 million for neighborhood projects, plus the additional \$500,000 for sidewalks. Rob asked about ethical issues on stating an opinion on a ballot issue. Rob and T aren't sure if we should get involved when the level of commitment isn't up to our earlier calls for pedestrian programs. The agreement was to postpone official comment from SPAB.

## **7. Round Robin (7:20)**

Sarah has been looking for a webtool for walking, similar to GoogleMaps or MapQuest for driving with the goal of links for them on the SPAB website.

Celeste is working with her Dad on a presentation about Langley's approach to shared-use streets. The Smith Tower apologizes about the misunderstanding over the Observation Tower visit and gave us free passes.

Rob noted the Viaduct supplemental EIS addressing lowered Aurora and closing the Viaduct for a few years is available. There is also a 520 proposal EIS which would impact Montlake, and an EIS on Eastlink (I-90). A signal was put in at 98th and Greenwood but the concern is it will attract traffic. He is in a policy group for Feet First that meets next week.

Fiona commented on the pedestrian alert signs that show pedestrians flying out of the way of danger and doesn't think they are effective. She also noticed that crosswalks signs at blinking lights are often behind trees.

Jean has noticed sidewalks closed in the middle of the block, which required backtracking or going around. She tells people working there to move the closure signs.

Chris went to the bike master plan meeting and was impressed with the activity of marking maps with comments, which stimulated discussion among attendees. She will ask Megan if there's a way to raise awareness that all intersections are unmarked crosswalks. She recommended the movie "Walking to Werner" and will be in Denmark until January. Howard Wu will serve as Board Secretary.

T will be in Copenhagen in October for Sustainable Tour. She was happy to see the California Ave Junction area under consideration for crosswalk improvements because she and a co-worker had incidents there. At Viaduct meetings, she could not tell the difference between the tunnel and Viaduct rebuild from 3-D movies (she'll send a link) and thinks we should reconsider the pedestrian

aspects. Rob mentioned we should follow up on Steve Pearce's presentation and get drawings. She is working on street improvement projects and the possibility of a curbless street project (in another city). She would like comments on this idea.

Howard was at a block meeting for his NE 130th neighborhood where they addressed pedestrian issues, and planned a speed watch. At the intersection with 35th Ave, a new Fred Meyer was supposed to have a signalized intersection, but doesn't. Rob and Howard discussed if it was a development condition and if so, it would be in records.

Jodie (and Howard) was also at the Bicycle Planning Meeting and was impressed with the approximately 400 attendees. She sent an email about the Intersection Repair Project, a non-profit that works to create gathering places in a public street, such as a vibrant street painting at the intersection to bring people out to walk and indicate the area is more than a thoroughfare. For \$1500 it is an inexpensive traffic calming mechanism. She attended a design charrette with 50 people about Lander, at the Beacon Hill light rail station. One design is a curbless street with a plaza, others are paving changes or closing the street in front of the station.

#### **8. Upcoming Agenda Items (7:55)**

Rob suggested checking with Megan on Pedestrian Master Plan Scoping. Jodie suggested pushing for the Master Plan regardless of budget outcomes and discussing the budget.

T and Jodie discussed Viaduct followup to comment on pedestrian components.

Jodie said she wanted to look into Rainier Valley Safety Project, which is signed along Rainier but we don't know what it is. Mike will come in and talk about progress on the Sidewalk Program. In December, the Bicycle Master Plan people could present.

Rob said, regarding the Viaduct, planning on design has been on the tunnel but legislature seems to favor a rebuilt viaduct. He said we should consider the impact of the construction. T said it would be good to see a preview of the Transportation Mitigation Plan. Rob said there is a preview in the EIS. T and Rob suggested a presentation once it's published.

#### **9. Adjourn (8:00)**